

# Brookline Youth Baseball



## Coaching Guide 2009

[brooklineyouthbaseball.org](http://brooklineyouthbaseball.org)

## REQUIREMENTS

### **Submit a CORI/SORI Form**

Before you meet with your team, you must submit a Criminal Offender Record Information form or Sex Offender Record Information form to your league VP. This requirement applies to all head coaches, assistant coaches, and other adults who interact directly with your players. You can find the form on the BYB website ([brooklineyouthbaseball.org](http://brooklineyouthbaseball.org)) by clicking the “Rules/Docs” link.

### **Abide by the Codes of Conduct**

You are required to read and observe BYB’s *Code of Conduct*, which is available on the BYB website under “Rules/Docs” and is included in the rules for your league. In addition, all youth sports leagues in Brookline must follow the *Brookline Youth Sports Code of Conduct*, which is available through the Recreation Department.

### **Play by the Rules**

You must learn and follow the rules of the league in which you’re coaching. The rules for each league are posted on the BYB website under “Rules/Docs.” (To help resolve in-game conflicts, it’s a good idea to keep a printed copy of the rules with you at every game.)

## OBJECTIVES

### **Make It Fun**

Kids play youth baseball to have fun and be with their friends, and they tend to learn more when they’re enjoying themselves.

### **Teach the Game**

Take advantage of opportunities to teach your players something new every day. Use basic instruction, practice drills, and successes and failures in games to teach baseball skills, sportsmanship, and what it means to be part of a team.

### **Reward Effort**

Recognize players who give their best effort, even if the results aren’t perfect, so that all players know what’s important and what to aspire to. Remember, sometimes kids give their best effort and still struggle.

### **Recognize Improvement**

Playing well doesn’t ensure victory, but it’s a step in the right direction. So be sure to recognize areas where your team has improved even when they lose.

### **Play to Win**

Everybody wants to win, and there’s nothing wrong with playing to win. But winning shouldn’t come at the expense of the other objectives listed above.

## TEACHING TIPS

### **Keep It Short**

When introducing a new skill, spend only a few minutes talking before letting the players try it for themselves. Otherwise, they may get bored and lose focus.

### **Keep It Simple**

Work on only one new skill at a time. Players are more likely to develop proper fundamentals and confidence when the instruction is simple and easy to grasp. If you try to teach too much at once, they likely won’t learn anything.

### **Quality Over Quantity**

During practice, limit the number of repetitions of a skill (swings, ground balls, etc.) and allow players to take breaks. Players who practice the same skill for too long tend to get tired and slip into bad habits, and practicing bad habits only reinforces bad habits.

### **Know Your Players’ Limits**

Some information in this guide gets into greater detail than may be appropriate for very young or inexperienced players. When working with these players, focus on the most basic skills first and introduce more advanced instruction only when they’re ready.

## INJURIES

If a player gets injured, use your judgment to determine the best course of action. You and your assistants can treat minor cuts and bruises. However, in case of a more serious injury such as a major cut, a broken bone, or an injury to the head or chest, immediately call the player’s parent once you determine that the player’s condition is stable. If the player is unconscious or otherwise unstable, immediately call 911 and then call the player’s parent.

To ensure that you’re prepared for injuries to players, keep with you at every practice and game: a **first aid kit** and **ice packs** (provided by BYB); and home, work, and cell **phone numbers** for parents and emergency contacts.

If you run out of ice packs or first aid supplies, be sure to replenish them as soon as possible. You can pick up additional ice packs and first aid supplies at no charge at Airo Sports. If none are available there, notify your league VP and, if necessary, buy them elsewhere and submit the expense to your league VP for reimbursement.

## THIS GUIDE

The following pages provide step-by-step instructions for performing a variety of **Basic Skills** and **Practice Drills**. If you have any questions about this guide, please send an e-mail to [clinics@brooklineyouthbaseball.org](mailto:clinics@brooklineyouthbaseball.org).

# THROWING

## Throwing Position and Form

**STANCE:** Stand with feet wider than shoulders, knees bent. Keep weight on balls of feet, with chest forward above toes. Place throwing elbow slightly higher than shoulder and throwing hand above elbow.

**GRIP:** Hold ball across wide seams (four-seam grip), fingers on top pointing away from head.

**POINT:** Position glove-side shoulder low and at chest of target, with glove in front of body.

**DRIVE:** Crow-hop horizontally, not vertically, and rotate back hip to target just before throwing.

**FOCUS:** Lock eyes on chest of target.

**FINISH:** Let back leg follow through after throw.



Throwing Position

## One-Knee Throwing Drill

Practice proper arm and upper body movement before regular warm-up throwing to reinforce mechanics.

1. Two players face each other 10 feet apart, with throwing-side knee and glove-side foot on ground, and glove-side knee toward target.
2. Thrower holds ball with upper body in throwing position, pointing glove-side shoulder at target.
3. Bring throwing arm forward above shoulder at first and then downward, with fingers on top of ball.
4. As arm comes forward, pivot hips to square upper body to receiver.
5. Release ball with arm extended and hand at eye level.
6. Allow head and chest to continue forward and down toward glove-side knee.
7. Raise upper body into receiving position (see next page) and get ready to receive throw from partner.
8. After 10 throws each, increase distance to 20 feet for 10 throws each.



One-Knee Throw

## Warm-Up Throwing Drill

Practice throwing position and form while warming up before practices and games. Too often players don't take warm-up throwing seriously, and instead spend the time fooling around and experimenting with throwing positions and forms that they would never use in a game.

- Closely supervise warm-up throwing and require your players to use proper position and form.
- Explain to players that every time they throw correctly, they reinforce proper muscle memory — and every time they throw using poor mechanics, they reinforce bad habits.

# RECEIVING

## Receiving Position and Form

**STANCE:** Stand facing thrower with weight on balls of feet and knees bent, chest slightly forward above toes. Extend arms toward thrower with elbows bent.

**RECEIVE:** Catch ball away from body and absorb impact by bringing glove in to body.

**ADJUST:** If ball is above waist, receive with glove fingers above palm. If below waist, keep glove fingers below palm. If thrown to either side, move feet to get behind ball.

**SECURE:** Keep bare hand near glove and use to secure ball and begin transfer quickly.

**TRANSFER:** After receiving ball, transfer by reaching into glove to grip it. Don't flip it from glove to throwing hand.

**GRIP:** Grip ball across wide seams and begin separating from glove in front of chest. (Gripping across wide seams causes ball to move in a straight line; gripping along narrow seams causes it to tail.)

**PIVOT:** While separating ball from glove, pivot into throwing position.



Receiving Position

## Finding the Seams Drill

Practice gripping the ball across the wide seams (four-seam grip) while transferring from glove to hand.

1. Two players face each other 20 feet apart, with throwing-side knee and glove-side foot on ground, and glove-side knee up and pointing at target.
2. Receiver starts with upper body in receiving position.
3. Thrower throws ball using proper upper body form (described in steps 2–6 under *One-Knee Throwing Drill* on page 3).
4. After receiving ball, begin transfer from glove to hand in front of chest and find four-seam grip quickly.
5. Pivot upper body into throwing position.
6. Throw to partner using proper upper body form, remaining on one knee.



Four-Seam Grip

## Warm-Up Receiving Drill

Practice receiving position and form while warming up before practices and games. As with warm-up throwing, players should consider this an opportunity to reinforce proper muscle memory rather than to socialize and fool around.

- Closely supervise warm-up receiving and require your players to use proper position and form.
- Explain to players that the more they practice receiving correctly, the more natural proper mechanics will become.

## From the Wind-Up

**STANCE:** Heels together on rubber, with body facing catcher, glove and hand together at letters.

**PIVOT:** Take small step straight back or at 45-degree angle on toe of front (glove-side) foot, keeping weight centered, then pivot back (throwing-side) foot parallel to rubber.

**LIFT:** Raise front knee to waist and point at corner base, bending back knee slightly. Keep front ankle relaxed, weight centered, and front shoulder pointed at target.

**SPREAD:** Separate hands in rounded “U” motion, finishing with throwing hand above shoulder and fingers on top of ball, ball facing away from head toward center field, and glove toward target. Lower front foot and stride toward plate, keeping hip and shoulder pointed at plate and weight over back leg.

**TURN:** Rotate front foot and knee to catcher, keeping upper body weight over back leg.

**LAND:** Land on toes of front foot in straight line toward catcher with front knee bent. As

feet lands, brace front knee and keep upper body back.

**DRIVE:** Push off back foot and begin opening hips toward catcher, allowing front shoulder to open as well.

**SQUARE:** Rotate open toward catcher from bottom up: waist, chest, shoulders, and throwing arm.

**RELEASE:** Bring upper body and arm forward and down over front leg together, and release ball out front on straight line toward catcher.

**FINISH:** Swing pitching hand down across opposite shin and let back foot land even with front foot. As ball crosses plate, straighten upper body into fielding position.

## From the Stretch

**STANCE:** Stand sideways to home plate, with feet shoulder-width apart and most of weight on back leg.

**SET:** Bring hands together at belt and front foot backward next to back foot. Come to a complete stop in the set position to avoid committing a balk.

**LIFT:** From set position, raise front thigh until it's parallel to ground. Make sure back leg is bent slightly, not locked at knee.

Remaining steps, **SPREAD** through **FINISH**, should be the same as described under *From the Wind-Up*, above.



Stance



Lift

## Balance Drill

Practice balancing weight directly above the back leg when lifting the front leg.

1. Pitcher stands at rubber with front leg raised, back leg bent slightly, and hands at chest.
2. Hold this position for one minute, then rest for 30 seconds.
3. Repeat five times.

## Checkpoints Drill

Break pitching motion into four sections, with each ending at one of these checkpoints.

1. Heels together on rubber, hands at chest.
2. Back foot parallel to rubber, back knee bent slightly, front knee raised to waist, hands together at belt.
3. Hands spread, front shoulder and glove pointed at catcher, front foot in landing position (straight toward catcher), front knee bent slightly.
4. Pitching hand across opposite shin, upper body bent forward, back foot even with front foot.



Land

## Game Strategy

Throw at least 60% of pitches for strikes. Change speeds and vary pitch locations (low, high, inside, outside) to keep batters off balance.



Finish

## Pitching Limits and Arm Care

Most leagues require you to track the number of pitches a pitcher throws and set pitch limits per game and per week. You should also take the following extra precautions to protect your pitchers' arms:

- Go easy on pitchers' arms during practice, especially pitchers who will pitch in a game in the next day or two.
- When tracking pitches, be sure to take into account warm-up pitches and throws made while playing other positions.
- Use extra caution: for players who are younger, weaker, or have poor mechanics; early in the season, when arms aren't fully conditioned; and in cold weather.
- Make sure each pitcher keeps his/her pitching arm warm between innings. Also, instruct each pitcher to ice the shoulder and elbow for 20 minutes right after the game, either at the field or at home.

# CATCHING

## Receiving Pitches

**CROUCH:** Squat far enough behind plate to avoid bat, with weight on balls of feet.

**SET TARGET:** Extend arm to pitcher with elbow bent and mitt low in strike zone.

**RECEIVE:** Receive pitch with mitt away from body and bare hand behind back (to avoid injury from foul balls).

## Blocking Pitches in the Dirt

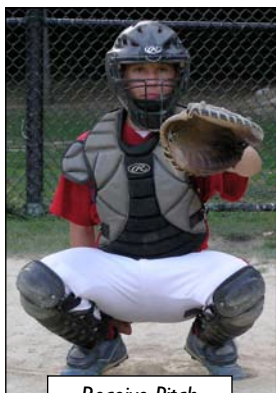
**SHIFT:** Move feet to get body behind ball.

**DROP:** Bring knees to ground with mitt between legs and bare hand behind back.

**SURROUND:** To get body low and keep ball near home plate: angle body so chest faces home plate, keep butt between heels and knees wide, cup shoulders forward, and relax to absorb impact and deaden ball.

**PROTECT:** Drop chin toward chest to protect throat.

**BLOCK:** Don't worry about catching ball; blocking it back toward plate and within reach will often keep base runners from advancing.



Receive Pitch

## Fielding Pop-Ups

**FLIP:** Remove mask when ball is hit, and hold in hand (don't toss right away).

**SEARCH:** Look up to find ball and listen for guidance from pitcher or coach.

**TOSS:** After locating ball, toss mask away from area where ball is coming down.

**CATCH:** If ball is in front of home plate in fair territory, catch with back to pitcher.

**SECURE:** Cover ball with bare hand to keep it from popping out of mitt.

## Throwing Down to a Base

**RECEIVE:** Catch ball close to body to avoid contact with swinging bat.

**GRIP:** While receiving ball, bring mitt and hand together under chin, cover ball with bare hand, and find seam with fingers.

**TRANSFER:** Move quickly into throwing position — feet wide, body low, knees bent, and front shoulder pointed at target. Separate hands under chin and bring ball straight back behind ear with elbow at shoulder height, hand above elbow, and fingers behind ball.



Throw Down

**THROW:** Keeping knees bent and body low, drive back hip toward target, and bring arm forward.

**FINISH:** After throw, allow back leg to follow through toward target to take full advantage of lower body momentum.

## Blocking Drill

Practice blocking pitches in the dirt.

1. Coach stands 25–30 feet from plate and tosses pitches to catcher in dirt.
2. Pitch to different locations: to both sides of and directly at catcher.
3. Catcher practices blocking using body and mitt.

## No-Hands Blocking Drill

Practice blocking pitches using body only.

1. Two catchers face each other in ready position, 20 feet apart, each with 10 baseballs.
2. Catchers alternate throwing and blocking balls in dirt to practice form.
3. Receiving catcher keeps hands behind back and blocks ball with legs and upper body only — no hands.



Block Pitch

## Pop-Up Drill

Practice fielding pop-ups around home plate.

1. Coach stands at home plate and hits or throws pop-ups to catcher.
2. Catcher practices removing mask, finding ball, tossing mask away, and catching ball with two hands.

## Throw-Down Drill

Practice throw-downs to each base.

1. Catcher in full gear squats behind plate with batter in batter's box.
2. Pitcher throws pitch from mound.
3. Using proper technique, catcher receives pitch and throws to third base, second base, and first base on three consecutive pitches.
4. Batter swings through some pitches (no contact) so catcher can practice staying behind bat.

## Quick-Hands Throw-Down Drill

Practice quick release on throw-downs.

1. Two catchers in gear, 15 feet apart, face each other in receiving position (squat).
2. First catcher throws ball to second catcher.
3. Second catcher practices proper fundamentals to increase speed and accuracy, then throws ball back to first catcher.
4. Each catcher drops into receiving position immediately after throwing ball to prepare to receive throw.
5. Each catcher receives 20–25 throws.



Field Pop-Up

## Fielding Ground Balls

**READY:** Start with feet wider than shoulders, knees and waist bent, chest directly above toes, glove and hand extended toward batter with palm up. Rock from side to side on balls of feet.

**APPROACH:** When ball is hit, stutter step for timing and align it with glove-side shoulder. Step to ball with right foot, bend knee and lower chest, and bring glove to ground. Then, step with left foot (feet apart), center body behind ball, stay low, and slide glove and hand forward.

**FIELD:** Receive ball with feet wider than shoulders, knees bent, butt low, chest at waist level, glove at ground and extended with palm up, bare hand next to glove, and eyes on ball.

**CRADLE:** Once ball is in glove, pull glove to stomach keeping glove palm up, hand on top of ball, and body low to ground.

**SEPARATE:** Transfer ball in front of body, not at back shoulder. Reach into glove, grip ball across seams, and separate hands into throwing position.

## Fielding Throws at First Base

**COVER:** When ground ball is hit to other infielder, first baseman runs to base and faces thrower.

**SET:** First baseman keeps both feet together with heels on inside edge of base in order to react to ball if thrown off line.

**STRETCH:** After ball has been thrown, first baseman steps toward ball with glove-side foot and stretches glove toward ball to catch it away from body.

## Cutting Off Throws

- Third baseman cuts throws from left field to home plate (shortstop covers third base).
- Shortstop cuts throws from left or center field to second base (second baseman covers base), and from left or center field to third base.
- Second baseman cuts throws from right field to second base or third base (shortstop covers second base).
- First baseman cuts throws from center or right field to home plate.

## Executing Rundowns (four infielders involved)

- Player with ball: holds in hand at eye level out front, with fingers behind ball; chases runner while holding ball still until runner commits to direction; throws if unable to tag runner; and continues forward to back up base.
- Player waiting for throw: creeps toward base runner (to shorten running room) until runner commits to direction, and stays ready to receive.
- Back-up players: remain behind each base until player involved in rundown leaves base to chase runner.

(Objectives: Chase runner back toward original base. Tag after two throws.)



Ready

## Field-and-Run Drill

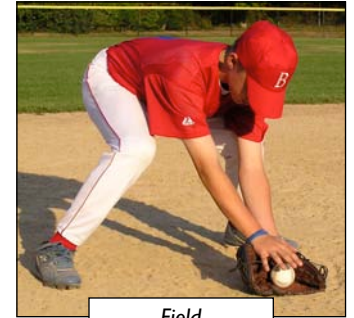
Practice infield fundamentals and improve conditioning.

1. Half of players line up at shortstop, and other half at first base.
2. First shortstop fields three grounders and throws each to first baseman.
3. Then, shortstop and first baseman both sprint to end of opposite line. This keeps players moving and occupied, and helps with conditioning.
4. Next shortstop in line fields three grounders and throws to next first baseman, and both sprint to end of opposite line.
5. Continue until each player takes several turns in each position.

## Field-and-Rotate Drill

Practice fielding, transferring, and throwing.

1. Five players involved, with four positioned in corners of 15-foot square and one waiting outside the square to join.
2. First corner player rolls grounder to second corner player (clockwise), then runs to second corner. (Fifth player joins at first corner.)
3. Second corner player fields grounder and throws ball to third corner, and then runs to third corner.
4. Third corner player catches throw and rolls grounder to fourth corner, and then runs to fourth corner.
5. Fourth corner player fields grounder and throws to first corner (where fifth player is now standing), and then runs to first corner.
6. Continue rotation for 10–15 minutes.



Field

## Throw-Around Drill

Practice throwing form and accuracy.

1. Two fielders at each infield position (except pitcher), close to grass, with each catcher holding a ball.
2. Catcher #1 throws ball to third baseman #1, who throws to second baseman #1, who throws to shortstop #1, who throws to first baseman #1, who throws to catcher #1 to complete cycle.
3. Midway through cycle, when ball reaches second baseman #1, catcher #2 starts second cycle by throwing ball to third baseman #2, and so on.
4. When done correctly, the two balls will always be two bases apart.

## Situations Drill

Practice game situations with infielders, outfielders, and base runners.

1. Nine players play positions, and extra players run bases (wearing helmets).
2. First runner starts in batter's box (without bat), and pitcher throws pitch. (Catcher receives pitch and rolls ball out of play.)
3. Coach self-hits ball into field, base runner runs, and fielders make play.
4. Runners who reach base safely stay on base (clear bases after three outs).
5. Rotate players so that all play positions and run bases.

## Fielding Fly Balls

**READY:** Start with feet wider than shoulders, knees bent, waist bent slightly forward, glove extended between chest and waist, weight on balls of feet. Take two steps in on delivery of pitch.

**APPROACH:** When ball is hit in air, first step is back. If ball is hit to either side, pop hips open in direction of ball, repositioning feet at same time. Run with head steady, in an arc to get behind ball. Toward end of arc, momentum should be heading in toward infield.

**FIELD:** Settle under ball with glove-side foot, hip, and shoulder slightly forward. Field ball with glove above and in front of throwing shoulder for easy transition to throwing position.

**SEPARATE:** Transfer ball in front of body, not at back shoulder. Grip ball across seams and separate hands into throwing position.

## Fielding Grounders

**READY:** Start with feet wider than shoulders, knees bent, waist bent slightly forward, glove extended between chest and waist, weight on balls of feet. Take two steps in on delivery of pitch.

**APPROACH:** When ball is hit, stutter step for timing and align it with glove shoulder. If ball is hit to either

side, pop hips open in direction of ball, repositioning feet at same time. Run with head steady, in an arc to get behind ball. Toward end of arc, momentum should be heading in toward infield. As ball nears, lower glove and chest smoothly over front foot.

**FIELD:** When fielding ball, have glove-side foot forward, knees bent, upper body low to ground, and glove in front of foot. Run “through the ball,” keeping body low and fielding ball while moving toward infield (to get ball back to infield more quickly and keep base runners from advancing).

**SEPARATE:** Transfer ball in front of body, not at back shoulder. While momentum is still moving toward infield, reach into glove with bare hand, grip ball across seams, and separate hands into throwing position (see *THROWING*, page 3).



Ready

## Backing Up Plays

- On balls hit to outfield, center fielder backs up both corner outfielders and both corner outfielders back up center fielder.
- On throws from corner outfielder to second base, opposite corner outfielder runs in to back up second baseman or shortstop.
- On throws from any infielder to first base, right fielder backs up first base.
- On throws from catcher to any base, nearest outfielder backs up that base.

## Do-or-Die Drill

Practice charging outfield grounders as if runners are on base.

1. Half of players stand in outfield, 15 feet apart and facing infield, with other half positioned as cut-off infielders.
2. Place a ball on ground 10 feet in front of each outfielder.
3. Each outfielder approaches ball at same time, beginning with stutter step.
4. Outfielder fields ball with glove-side foot forward, knees bent, upper body low to ground, and glove in front of foot.
5. Outfielder runs “through the ball” while fielding, keeping chest low and scooping ball while moving toward infield (don’t stop forward momentum).
6. Outfielder transfers ball in front of body, not at back shoulder, and throws to cut-off. (Outfielders and cut-offs then switch positions and repeat.)

## Wide Receiver Drill

Practice running under and fielding fly balls.

1. Coach stands on left field line and players line up five feet away in foul territory, each holding a ball.
2. First player tosses ball to coach, then sprints past coach toward outfield.
3. Coach throws fly ball beyond player; player runs with head steady, gets behind ball and catches in fielding position (on the run only if necessary).

## Pop-and-Go Drill

Practice popping hips open to run down fly balls.

1. Outfielders stand on left field line, each holding a ball. Coach stands at shortstop facing left field.
2. First player runs to left field, faces coach, throws ball to coach, and gets into ready position.
3. Coach throws fly ball behind/to side of player.
4. Player pops hips open toward ball and sprints to get behind ball and field it.

## Call-and-Catch Drill

Practice communicating on fly balls in the gap.

1. Half of outfielders line up in center field and other half in left field. Coach stands behind shortstop position facing left-center field.
2. First fielder in each line steps forward and gets into ready position.
3. Coach throws fly ball into gap between them, and both fielders pursue ball.
4. Fielder nearest to ball calls for it by shouting “mine!” or “ball!” three times.
5. Fielder who calls for ball fields it while other fielder veers off and backs up play. (If both outfielders can catch ball, center fielder should take charge.)

## Situations Drill

See *INFIELD*, page 10.



Field

## Batting Stance and Swing

**STANCE:** Feet wider than shoulders, weight on balls of feet, knees bent, hips squared to home plate, upper body upright, shoulders squared to plate, elbows below hands, wrists loose, hands at back shoulder, eyes focused on ball, rock side to side to stay loose.

**LOAD:** When pitcher's arm starts moving up and back, move hands and weight back toward catcher (on flat line) to build momentum.

**STRIDE:** When pitcher's front foot lands, step toward pitcher with front foot, but keep weight on back foot.

**IDENTIFY:** Find ball out of pitcher's hand and identify type and location of pitch.

**PIVOT:** Turn back foot so that heel faces catcher and hips open to pitcher, but keep front shoulder closed.

**HANDS:** Start hands and knob of bat in straight line toward pitcher, keeping bat barrel above handle and hands close to body.

**WRISTS:** Turn wrists quickly as hands cross in front of body toward pitcher.

**FINISH:** Allow hands, shoulders, and hips to rotate fully for extension and power.

## Bunting (Sacrifice)

**STANCE:** Start in regular batting stance as described above, toward front of batter's box (closer to pitcher).

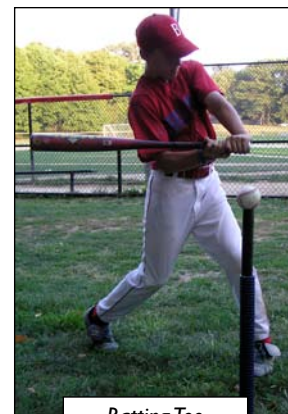
**SQUARE:** During pitcher's wind-up, pivot open with both feet while keeping knees bent. Keep back foot in original spot to avoid stepping on plate.

**GRIP:** Keep bottom hand at handle. Slide top hand to midpoint of bat, gripping back of bat with thumb and forefinger and curling other fingers into palm (to avoid injury, don't wrap fingers around bat).

**POSITION:** Keep barrel of bat at top of strike zone (shoulder level) and slightly above handle, with arms almost fully extended toward pitcher.

**ADJUST:** Reposition bat to bunt low pitch by bending knees, with barrel remaining near shoulder level.

**BUNT OR TAKE:** If pitch is a strike, make contact in front of plate in fair territory (to keep ball fair) and toward end of bat (to deaden ball). Bunt toward base lines by adjusting bat angle with bottom hand. If pitch is above bat or outside strike zone, pull bat against body and out of strike zone.



## Batting Tee Drill

Practice swing while hitting a stationary ball.

1. Coach places ball on batting tee in position where batter would make contact with a pitched ball.
2. Player works through parts of swing, focusing on specific areas that need improvement.
3. Player takes 15–20 swings at a time before resting. Too many swings can cause player to get tired and fall into bad habits.

## Soft Toss Drill

Practice swing while hitting a slow-moving ball.

1. Coach gently tosses tennis balls (to reduce chance of injury) from beyond front outside corner of batter's strike zone.
2. Player works through various parts of swing, focusing on specific areas that need improvement.
3. Player takes 15–20 swings at a time before resting. Too many swings can cause player to get tired and fall into bad habits.

## On-Field Batting Drill

Practice hitting live pitches from coach.

1. Create four groups of equal size. Groups rotate from on-field batting (one group) to fielding batted balls (two groups) to separate off-field batting drill (one group). Group that bats first changes with each practice.
2. Batters practice bunting first few pitches, then swing away for 10 pitches.
3. Fielders return balls to first baseman, who collects them in a bucket.

(BP Running Drill on page 16 describes how to add base running to this drill so that more players are occupied and learning.)

## Bunt Pepper Drill

Practice bunting and fielding.

1. One player holds bat while four players stand 10–15 feet away from batter and 5–10 feet apart, in ready position but without gloves.
2. Fielder at batter's far left throws ball softly to batter's strike zone, and batter bunts to next fielder, who fields and throws to batter, who bunts to next fielder, and so on.
3. Batter practices bunting technique; fielders approach grounders in fielding position, field with bare hands, transfer to throwing position, and throw ball back toward batter.
4. After batter bunts twice to each fielder, all five players rotate clockwise and new batter takes turn at bat.



## From the Batter's Box

- On grounder to infield, look up after three steps to find ball. If fielded by infielder, run outside base line with head down, then run through base while stepping on nearest edge with left foot and turning head to right to protect face and look for overthrow. If grounder gets through infield, start rounding first base halfway down base line, lower inside shoulder, round base by stepping on inside corner, look up to find ball, and listen to first base coach.
- On ball hit to outfield, run and round base as described above.

## From First Base

- On grounder to infield, run hard to second base and slide.
- On base hit to outfield, run hard, watch ball, and look at third base coach for instruction.
- On line drive to infield with less than two outs, get back to base.
- On fair fly ball with less than two outs, go about half way to next base, depending on where ball is hit (be able to get back if caught).
- On foul fly ball with less than two outs, get ready to tag up.

## From Second Base

- On grounder to left side, stay close to base unless forced.
- On grounder to right side, always advance to third base.
- On base hit to outfield, run hard and look at third base coach.
- On line drive to infield with less than two outs, get back to base.
- On fair fly ball with less than two outs, go about half way to next base, depending on where ball is hit (be able to get back if caught).
- On foul fly ball with less than two outs, get ready to tag up.

## From Third Base

- On grounder with infield back and no force play, run on contact unless it's hit hard to third baseman or back to pitcher.
- On grounder with infield in and no force play, stay close to base, watch play, and listen to coach.
- On line drive to infield with less than two outs, get back to base.
- On fly ball to outfield (fair or foul) with less than two outs, keep foot on base and listen to coach for timing of tag-up.

## Sliding

**EXTEND:** Roughly 7–10 feet away from base, extend top leg toward base. Top leg should be leg closest to ball so that it's easier to turn upper body and face away from direction of throw. (Always slide feet first.)

**LAND:** Bend bottom leg under top leg, then land on outside of thigh and calf.

**PROTECT:** Keep upper body back and hands closed above head to avoid injury.

**TOUCH:** Slide into base with top foot, at corner of base farthest from ball.

**CUSHION:** Bend top leg on contact with base to prevent jamming knee or ankle. (This is less of an issue if the base moves freely.)

## First-to-Third Drill

Practice running from first base to third base on a hit to right field.

1. Divide players into four groups of equal size.
2. Groups take position in field as follows: one group as base runners (lining up in foul territory outside first base); one as right fielders, one as second basemen, and one as third basemen.
3. One player in each group steps forward to be involved in play.
4. One coach hits base hit to right field, and another coaches third base.
5. Base runner sprints to second base, looks up at third base coach ten feet before base, then rounds second base, sprints to third base, and slides.
6. Right fielder fields ball and throws to cut-off (second baseman), who throws to third baseman to try to cut down base runner.
7. Next player at each position steps forward to execute same play.
8. Each player takes three turns at each position.

## Running Cycle Drill

Practice running out different hits.

*First, all players line up at home plate, run one at a time, and jog back to line.*

1. Run out infield grounder through first base and look to right for overthrow (and to protect face) when crossing base.
  2. Run out base hit, round first base, find ball in outfield, then get back to base.
  3. Run out “hustle” double: round first base, locate ball in outfield, and sprint to second base.
  4. Run out routine double: round first base and continue to second.
- Next, half of players line up at home plate and half line up at first base.*
5. Runner on first base advances to third base and then jogs off field. Runner at plate runs out triple.
- Next, all players line up behind third base, run, and return to end of line.*
6. Tag up on fly ball and sprint through home plate.
  7. Sprint through home plate on infield grounder.



Slide

## BP Running Drill

Practice base running during batting practice.

1. Last batter in batting group acts as base runner, starting at first base.
2. While first batter is at bat, base runner leads or comes off base when pitch crosses plate (depending on league rules) and runs to second base on bunt.
3. Base runner remains on second base until batter finishes bunting.
4. When batter swings away, base runner advances to third base on hit.
5. On batter's final swing, base runner advances to home plate and batter runs to first base to practice running bases while next batter is at bat.

